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INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION
IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Letter dated 21 October 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the final document adopted jointly by the Ministers of Agriculture responsible for locust control of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) and of the Sahel, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, at a meeting held at Algiers on 27 September 1993.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 91 (e) and (f), 98, 99 and 100.

(Signed) Ramtane LAMAMRA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Final document of the meeting on locust control held at Algiers on 27 September 1993

The Ministers responsible for locust control of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Mali, Niger and the Republic of Chad or their representatives, as well as the representative of FAO, participating in the meeting on locust control held at Algiers on 27 September 1993 at the kind invitation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, and welcoming this initiative,

(a) Have reviewed the current locust situation in west and north-west Africa and its probable development;

(b) Have adopted the recommendations of the ad hoc meeting of experts from the region held at Tunis on 1 and 2 September 1993;

(c) Have agreed on the need to make use of agricultural aviation in the countries of the Maghreb and Sahel and to facilitate where appropriate movements within the infested zones;

(d) Express their concern and disquiet at:

(i) The serious locust situation currently prevailing in Mauritania, where more than 78 swarms have been spotted during a 10-day period in September 1993;

(ii) The risk of the situation deteriorating in western regions, particularly in Chad, Niger and Mali, due to the arrival of further swarms from Sudan, where intensive activity has been reported;

(iii) The serious locust situation reported in the eastern region of the area of the invasion, this constituting an important indicator of the possible onset of a long-term cycle of invasions;

(iv) The inadequate management of the locust problem, which must necessarily involve closer cooperation among all the countries of the area of the invasion on the basis of a joint, complementary strategy of prevention and control, taking due account of the preservation of fragile local ecosystems;

Decide as an immediate measure:

(i) To invite the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to implement quickly the emergency plan prepared by regional experts at the Tunis meeting (1 and 2 September 1993) and to undertake complementary activities to manage the situation in the front-line countries, particularly in Mauritania;

(ii) To mobilize all means and channels for the transmission of national locust and meteorological information in order to ensure the better

flow of such information as an essential basis for success in any control strategy. The Ministers invite FAO to continue its efforts to improve the flow of information to enable countries, in real time, to assess the locust situation and its probable development;

(iii) To invite FAO to organize, in this period of crisis, more frequent meetings of the countries of the area of invasion to enable them to exchange information and experience and modify control strategies;

(iv) To request FAO, in view of the seriousness of the locust situation, to include the item in the agenda of the Conference of the organization at its twenty-sixth session. In that connection, this final document could serve as a working paper in the discussions;

(v) To strengthen the intervention capacity of the Arab Maghreb Union and to provide it with additional facilities and financial means to facilitate rapid action in the countries of the Sahel whenever the situation so requires;

(vi) To entrust the Minister of Agriculture of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria with bringing to the attention of organizations and the international community the serious concern of the countries of the region over the locust threat currently affecting their agricultural economies and with increasing their awareness with a view to increasing their assistance, this being essential to the more effective management of the problem.

In the short term:

(i) To ensure sustained vigilance and surveillance to cope with any possible developments in locust activity during upcoming control campaigns;

(ii) To invite FAO to implement as quickly as possible the interregional preventive control project, with the objective of averting reinfestation by locust swarms from the western region;

(iii) To seek, in cooperation with FAO, sources of funding for the regional equipment project to establish automatic weather stations in swarming areas in the western region (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad), as an essential complement to the current regional network;

(iv) To initiate, jointly with FAO, a project to create a computerized network to allow countries to access in real time the FAO database on the desert locust and its environment;

(v) To invite FAO to make priority use, in its new acquisitions, of the pesticides currently available and ready for use in the region;

(vi) To mobilize and develop, at the regional level, all means of ensuring, during control campaigns, the safeguarding of human health as well as the conservation of the environment.

In the medium term:

(i) To invite FAO to formulate, within a consultative framework, a preventive control programme for the entire desert locust invasion area (western, central and eastern regions) comprising specific regional projects (strengthening of national units or establishment/strengthening of regional capacities, ...) in accordance with priorities and available funding. Such consultation should, in parallel, study the possibility of revamping coordination in order to improve its effectiveness;

(ii) To develop training and research in scientific and technical areas relating to locust control by making optimal use of national and regional capacities.

With respect to the western region, a regional training/research centre should be established. The relevant modalities will be studied jointly by the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in North-West Africa (CCDLNWA) and the Joint Anti-Locust and Anti-Aviarian Organization (OCLALAV).